

(b) and (c) There are no rules and regulations framed by the Government regarding increasing or decreasing the number of open cast mines. Mines are being opened to bridge the gap between demand and supply. The mine type i.e. under ground or opencast is determined considering the techno-economic and geo-mining condition of the coal deposit proposed for exploitation. The operation of opencast mines are governed by the existing provisions in Mines Act and other rules and regulations there under.

### **Merger of MTNL and BSNL**

3052. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:  
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal of merger of MTNL and BSNL is under consideration of Government;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor in view of consolidation taking place in the sector;

(c) if so, by when and the issues which have yet not been resolved; and

(d) by when Government are likely to finalize its view on the issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) to (d) Sir, the Government is examining several options (including merger) for restructuring MTNL and BSNL. Many complex issues relating to HR, differential wage structure in the two PSUs, stamp duty implications etc. are involved in this exercise. The Government will finalize its views only after making careful analysis of the cost involved vis-a-vis benefits of restructuring.

### **Quality of telecom services in Orissa**

3053. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:  
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's wireless base would cross 40 crore by 2010;